

Rural, Urban cooperation is the key to an adequate future food supply.

Jackie Judice, Northside Planting

Thanks for the kind introduction

First of all folks you need to know that public speaking is not one of my specialties; therefore, when you put a country boy like me in front of one of these things, no telling what might happen. However, if you are willing to take the chance then I will give it my best shot.

Just to give you an idea of how I feel right now, I would like to know, with a show of hands, how many people in here have ever hand-milked a cow? Well those of you that have can relate to what I am going to say, the rest of you have to take my word for it. From the time that I was 10 years old, until the day before I left to join the U. S. Military to participate in Uncle Sam's Viet Nam experience, I milked a cow everyday, twice a day. Now as long as I was milking old Betsy everything was fine. A bond developed between us, and we knew exactly what was expected of each other. But every now and then, what I call the new cow scenario would present itself. A new cow scenario is a young heifer that has given birth to her first calf, so unfortunately she had never been milked before. Well when milking a new cow there is a given that you have to accept before you even start. No matter what you do, sooner or later you will get kicked. Right this minute standing in front of this microphone and all you fine folks, I feel like I am milking a new cow in another man's barn with cold hands. In other words, I have got a feeling that no matter what I say today, I am going to get kicked.

On a more serious note, for you to understand where I am coming from today, I think that it is necessary for me to give you some of my family history. The Judice family migrated to the new world from a place in Northern France called Alsas-Lorraine. They were two brothers, and of the two only one had offspring. Therefore, making our roots fairly easy to trace. Now in 1795, a man named Etienne de Bore granulated sugar in what was considered a commercial amount. Thus, the birth of the Louisiana sugar industry. Well in 1800, Maximillion Judice was growing sugarcane in what is now Lafayette Parish. As you can see, the Judice family has been in the sugar business for 200 years. Because of this long heritage when people ask me what I do for a living, I usually say that I am a sugar-daddy. Sometimes when the audience is filled with elegant looking ladies, I tend to emphasize what a long line of sugar-daddies I come from.

All joking aside folks, I would like to take a trip back in time with you so that you will understand where I am coming from and maybe in a small way this humble man of the soil may have a positive impact.

Now before we start our trip, I want us to agree to disagree. I will be using some controversial numbers, so if you do not agree then change the numbers. But please remember that no matter what the numbers are, everything is relative.

Now if you agree that our planet, we call Earth, in the beginning was but a molten ball of rock. If you agree that it took approximately 15 billion years for it to evolve into what it is today. If you agree that if man last another 140 million years then we will have been here as long as the dinosaurs. If you believe, for the sake of this presentation, that man as we know him has been here for 300,000 years. Now remember, if you do not like my numbers change them because it is all relative. If you agree that man has only been farming the land for 10,000 years, before that we were

all hunters and gatherers. Now 10,000 years on 140 million years is insignificant, on 15 billion, not even worth mentioning. If you agree that man has only been in North America in any significant number since the 16th century, roughly 300 years. Now 300 years on 300,000 years is insignificant, on 140 million years not even worth mentioning, on 15 billion years not even the blink of an eye. Now, do you get where I am coming from? I was born in 1946, the population was approximately 150 million. The 2000 census came up with roughly 280 million, almost double in my 55 years. Now lets go to the world. It took from the birth of the planet to 1830 for the first billion people to accumulate. It took from 1830 to 1930, 100 years, for the second billion. The next four billion, which is where we are today took roughly 70 years. Some estimate the next billion will be here in 10-11 years. With the entrance of gene therapy in modern medicine, some say 150 year life-spans will become possible, maybe adding to the problem of this country.

My question to you is how are we farm folks, the ones with the responsibility to produce the food for this country and some of the rest of the world going to stay ahead of the demand, when producers are going broke at alarming rates at present. Folks, we Americans have lived in a secure society with full stomachs for so long that we just assume that it will always be that way. Now September 11th put a question mark on the secure part, but when are we going to realize that there is not guarantee that this country will always have enough food. The greater our population the greater the need for more hi-ways, more subdivisions, more industrial parks and this is the best one, more golf courses. All of these replacing prime farmland, which we are losing at the rate of 2500 acres a day. Also folks, something you all in D.C. should never forget is the fact that you have but a 30 day food supply at best. That is why it is so important that city folks and we farm folks work together to insure that this country has a sound, equitable farm policy. I always did say that congress should go on

a 3 day fast before making the farm policy for our country. How can they make a sound policy on full stomachs, I usually want to take a nap. We are so blessed in the good old USA. Food is so plentiful and so cheap that we are all getting fat. This is the reason that we have such an immigration problem. Everyone wants to come to a country where even the poor people are fat.

In my opinion, one of the most misused terms in agriculture is the term Farm Subsidy. When a society eats the way we do for 10-11% of personal income, while the farmers who produce it are going broke at alarming rates. Who has the best deal the consumer or the farmer. Therefore, I say the proper term is not Farm Subsidy, but Consumer Subsidy, because the consumer is getting the best deal. And trust me on this one folks, tax dollars are not what production agriculture wants. What we want is a fair price for our product. If we, as consumers, had to pay a little more for our food, maybe we would not overeat and waste so much.

Now I have got to blow my own horn. One of the best farm programs ever written is the sugar program. If it is run right, it does not cost the tax payer one penny. It is set up so that the consumer pays a little more at the grocery store, thus insuring a healthy domestic sugar industry.

Now, after all the propaganda I have just fed you, I have but one wish. My wish is that Rural and Urban America will work together to insure that our grandchildren will not know what it is to go hungry. As everyone is aware the world today is troubled. We now know that we are not immune, but I feel that I speak for all of the food and fiber producers of America when I pledge that we will do everything in our power to make sure that the Washington D.C. 30 day food supply will be replenished. Now what you city folks can do to insure that we keep our pledge is to help us get a fair price for our products.

SUGAR PACKETS

JEFF DAVIS